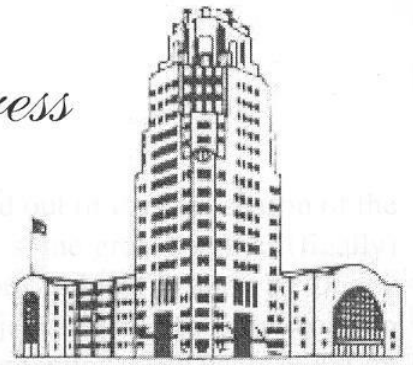


Empire State Express



March 2021

PUBLICATION OF THE NIAGARA FRONTIER CHAPTER NRHS, INC.

Editor: John C. Dahl Email nfcnrhs@gmail.com

The meeting of the Chapter is scheduled for Friday March 12, 2021. Social distancing and masks are required as we follow NY State mandated safety protocols due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

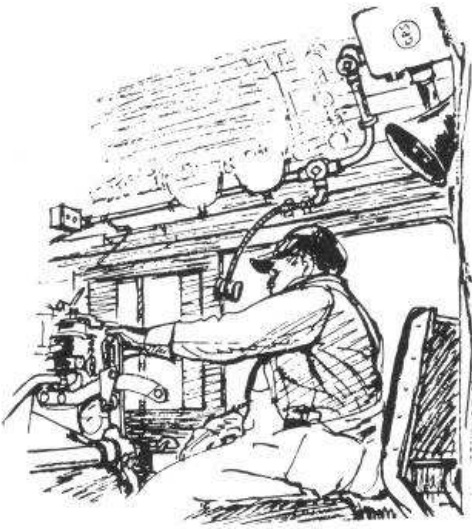
A PAGENT OF BICENTENNIAL RAILROADS



South Buffalo Railway No. 76, a vintage Alco built locomotive, is seen on its home turf in Lackawanna, NY in an undated photo. From a slide in the collection MJ Lewandowski.

Join us for a review from the West to the East as Mark “MJ” Lewandowski shows us numerous examples of the ‘Red – White & Blue’ of the Nation’s 200th birthday as American railroads helped celebrate our Bicentennial.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



When a steam locomotive is struggling to start a heavy train, you could always tell. You would hear the sharpness of the exhaust, like a bark or a shot. You see the whoosh of the steam and smoke up the stack. The height of the exhaust ejection above the stack and the volume of that, speaks to the effort. The wheels slowly begin to turn, a skilled engineer keeping the mighty beast from slipping as together they will move the tonnage forward. Now the train is moving. With each passing second the exhaust cadence quickens. The strain is as much felt as seen. This kind of scene played out daily across the country in the days before diesels. It was a case of 'Pressure versus inertia'.

The inertia caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is monumental. Everything stopped. Now we hope that the worst is over. Getting going again will be like getting the above train started again.

The Board of Directors will meet only once in the first quarter. This due to the restrictions imposed by the State and in an abundance of caution. Most of the Chapters business can be handled by email anyway. We have had conference call meetings in the past. Now that the sewer has been repaired, we can be in the station again.

Neal reports that most of the membership, 87 persons to date, have sent in their renewals. Most of those came with a donation. Thank you, thank you, thank you! If you haven't sent yours in, would you do that today?

We have overcome a major setback with the sewer problem, but it's fixed now. We are still in the process of getting a platform built for installing the handicap lift. We have the lift, the concrete is poured, the electrical line to power the lift is installed and ready to go. All we need to do construct the deck that goes around the lift. This has to be done this spring.

Becky Gerstung has sent in the contract to Chiavetta's for our Chicken Barbeque. The date is May 15th. Mark your calendars. We will be asking for volunteers when the date gets closer. Speaking of "calendars", Bob and Greg are now accepting photo submissions for the 2022 edition of the Chapter's publication.

February being a short month this too will be a short column. I hope that this finds all of you safe and well. I look forward to seeing you at the meeting. Don't forget your mask. Thanks to Bruce who will supervise the necessary protocols, temperature check, distance between seats, masks on, etc. .

Jim Ball

LAST RUN

Just before publication we have received word that Chapter member Bill Barren has passed away from complications of Covid-19. The Chapter offers sincere condolences to the family.

JAMESTOWN, WESTFIELD & NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD COMPANY

By Becky Gerstung

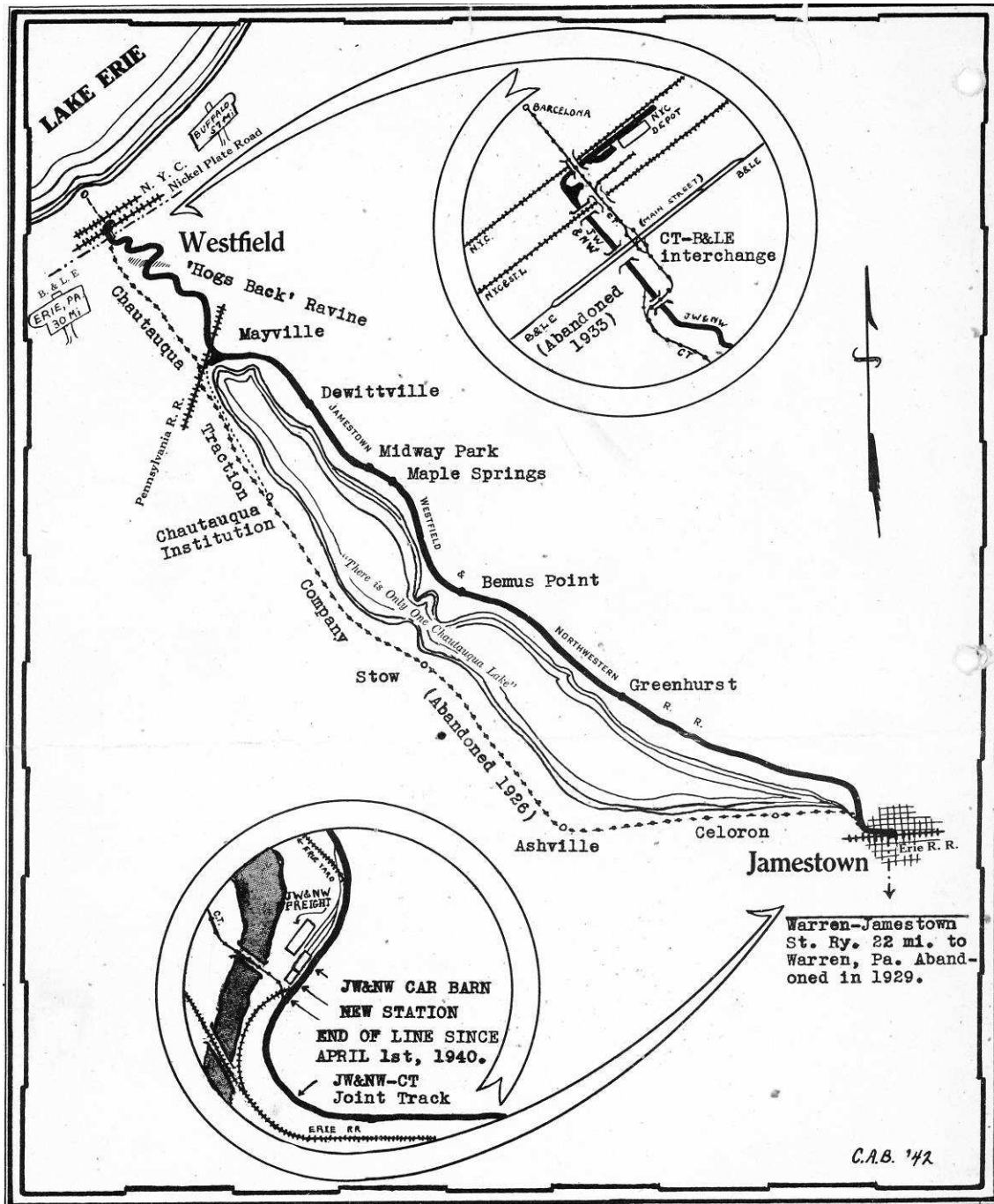
All photos, Harold Ahlstrom, Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS Archives



On what is certainly a wonderfully warm, sunny and idyllic day along the beautiful shore of Chautauqua Lake we see Jamestown, Westfield & North Western Car #303. The location is north of Greenhurst, on Griffiths Bay several miles west (north by timetable) of the line's Jamestown, NY terminal. The car is southbound. The famous electric interurban line hosted many trips for the Buffalo Railroad Enthusiasts and then later, Buffalo Chapter, NRHS. This photo could well be from the club's trip, which offered the option of dropping off at Midway Park. The trip flyer suggested "Get up a picnic basket lunch – Midway Park is a delightful spot for such a picnic." Round trip fare from Buffalo which would have ridden to Westfield, NY over New York Central and there connected to the JW&NW, "about \$2.50". Mid summer is a delightful time in Western New York. The shock of Pearl Harbor is still several months away; this is that last summer of peace for the United States, for the date of the photo is August 10, 1941. Oh for a time machine to take us back to this moment of bliss!

On the following pages, Becky Gerstung will relate the story of the JW&NW. The line was much more than just a member of the once legion electrified interurban railroads built in New York State. The route over the scenic Chautauqua ridge between Westfield and Jamestown was in the heart of the Concord grape growing region that to this day produces some of the best juice products and an assortment of fine wines. The former New York Central mainline through Westfield is now operated by CSX while the parallel former New York, Chicago & St. Louis, better known as the Nickel Plate Road, is owned by Norfolk Southern. While the lovely Westfield NYC depot still stands, no more do any passenger trains stop, and no more is the tooting horn of the JW&NW heard as it would roll into town to connect at the depot with Water Level Route trains. -JCD

The Jamestown, Westfield & Northwestern Railroad began with the Chautauqua Lake Railroad in 1890. This steam line ran from Jamestown along the east side of Chautauqua Lake to the Chautauqua Institution, founded by Lewis Miller and the Rev. John H. Vincent in 1874. It became the Jamestown, Chautauqua Lake & Erie Railroad in 1901 and extended to Westfield with a junction with the New York Central Railroad's mainline between Buffalo and Cleveland. A branch was built from Clifton to Falconer but was soon abandoned as unprofitable.



JW&NW continued...

At this time an empire was built with the Jamestown Street Railway, the Chautauqua Traction Company (interurban from Jamestown to Westfield along the west side of the lake, 1904-1926) and the Chautauqua Navigation Company. In 1913 the steam line was acquired, and electrification began. A portion from Mayville to Chautauqua was leased to the Pennsylvania Railroad and operated steam until its abandonment in 1926.

Wire stringing over the JC&LE, by then the Jamestown Westfield & Northwestern, began in 1914 and electric passenger service followed the progress of the crews extending each week. One steam train continued a daily round trip until August 20, 1914, when thru electric passenger service began Chautauqua Traction cars were used until the JW&NW cars arrived a week later. Freight service started on August 24, 1914.

Terminals of the JW&N were the car barn and offices at the boat landing in Jamestown and the New York Central station in Westfield. The railroad ran northwest along Lake Chautauqua through numerous residential communities to Shore Acres. Here it veered away from the shore, cuts across Bemus Point and then again follows the shore through Midway Park to Point Chautauqua. It crossed the Pennsylvania Railroad's Buffalo to Pittsburgh line at Mayville. Here it began to climb the summit of the ridge dividing the watersheds of Lake Erie and Lake Chautauqua. The view at the summit justifies the JW&NW slogan "AMERICA'S SCENIC ROUTE'. Heading northward the line drops steeply on a series of "S" curves, passes below the Nickel Plate Road and ends parallel and at grade level with the New York Central Railroad at Westfield

The railway was single track with passing sidings and a mile-long freight siding in Jamestown. Rail varied from 70 lb. to 90 lb. The trolley wire was direct suspension from wood poles.

The tracks of the Jamestown Street Railway were used to reach the business center of Jamestown until March 30, 1940. The JW&NW had its own shop and shed after jointly using the street railway car barn. On September 26, 1941, an Erie Railroad locomotive standing near the roundhouse "walked" away and crashed into the frame station. A new modern building with glass brick front was built.

Stations with baggage rooms and ticket agents were maintained at Bemus Point, Maple Springs, Dewittville, Mayville, Jamestown and Westfield. Trains operated by timecard authorization using standard rules. Passenger cars operated with two-man crews. Northbound trains were superior to southbound to help maintain close connections with the New York Central at Westfield. There were at one time six daily through round trips and two extra trips between Jamestown and Maple Springs.

Maintenance of way on the 32-mile road used two crews working from each end. Healthy freight traffic kept crews busy on day and evening runs. New York-Jamestown mail was contracted to the JW&NW. Having considerable snow fall in the area, plow crews were kept busy clearing the line.

Midway Park, an amusement center, was operated by the railway. It attracted summer weekend business to the rails.

Trolley pressure was about 500 volts DC supplied through portable semi-automatic substations. These were built into former passenger car bodies and located along the line. AC energy was purchased from the municipal lighting plant at Jamestown. In the beginning facilities of the Jamestown Traction Company were used.

The JW&NW linked into a network of interurban lines. In addition to the Chautauqua Traction Company connections were made at Westfield with the Buffalo & Erie Railway (formerly the Buffalo & Lake Erie Traction Company). At Jamestown connections were made with the Warren & Jamestown Street Railway. In establishing through traffic with trunk line railroads the JW&NW was considered in the ICC plan for consolidation with the New York Central System.

JW&NW continued...



Cars #301 and #303 at Boat Landing car barn, Jamestown, New York, 1942.

Cars 300-305 were delivered in 1914 from the Cincinnati Car Company. They had 60 seats, multiple unit control at both ends, were painted dark green with gold striping and lettering. Coach seats were black leather with rattan covered seats in the smoking section. Exterior paint was changed to bright red with gold lettering in the early 1920s.

Car 306 was built as an express motor, and then used as a plow. Number 307 was identical to #306 and was used as a line car. Car 308 was a work car. Cars 309-312 were built by the St. Louis Car Company and delivered in 1916. They had steel center entrances and vestibules separating rear coach from forward baggage and smoking sections. Number 312 was an observation-parlor car.

Motor 400 was a Baldwin-Westinghouse locomotive, 1914. Number 500, listed as Jamestown builder, 1927. Later they acquired two 70-ton diesel locomotives, numbers 600 and 700 from General Electric, date 1947. A four-wheel caboose, number 409, was purchased from the Bessemer & Lake Erie in 1927.

Road and car use decreased ridership. Passenger service ended in 1947. Freight service continued, but the decline in the furniture business and the use of trucks spelled the end of service in 1950.

The information in this article came from Bulletin 40 of the Central Electric Railfans' Association dated 1942. The author, Harold Ahlstrom, was a 50-year plus member of our chapter and was especially interested in traction subjects. *Editor note: The railroad's logo included the phrase "America's Scenic Route". Railfans dubbed the line the "Jesus Wept & No Wonder" Just how it got that moniker is a story to be told. The now late John Prophet shot beautiful 16 mm color movie film of the JW&NW prior to the Second World War. That treasured film has been digitized and resides in the Chapter Archives. It was recently shown at a meeting.*

JW&NW continued...



It is 1943 and World War II is raging. Wartime traffic on all railroads is reaching record levels. Car #304 is loading baggage and express parcels at Westfield, NY as the streamlined eastbound New York Central *Empire State Express* pauses briefly.



Parlor car #312 at Midway Park with a Buffalo Division of the Railroad Enthusiasts trip. Sunday, June 23, 1940.

JW&NW continued



Motors #400 and #500 at Boat Landing Yard, Jamestown, NY, 1940.

“SCENE” ON THE LINEa long time ago....



So is this Akron or Pembroke Center? In last month's ESX our panel of photo id'ers settled for Akron, NY. And yet.....one nagging clue to your editor is the “26” sign posted on the MOW shed to the left.

OK, Akron, NY is about 26 miles out from Buffalo, that much seemed sensible, but we did not have a map or other reference to confirm.

My book of railroad maps, said to be as of 1948 was confusing. It shows mileposts along the

Peanut measured east to west from Batavia, so “26” certainly did not fit Akron. Still searching, I eventually found a 1917 NYC timetable with a schedule for the Peanut line, and low and behold Pembroke Center is at milepost 26.57 as measured from North Tonawanda, where the original 6-foot gauge Canandaigua & Niagara Falls (Peanut) connected to the Buffalo & Niagara Falls (pre-New York Central) with a third rail arrangement along the B&NF to the Falls. So, is this Akron or is it Pembroke? I'm now leaning towards the latter. If anyone has additional historic photos or other documentation that can help confirm the location, please let us know! We are historians. Getting it right is important. - JCD

Niagara Frontier Chapter, NRHS archives. Photographer unknown.

“SCENE” ON THE LINE continued

Table 23 Batavia and Tonawanda									
READ DOWN					Miles	STATIONS		READ UP	
	66	62						63	67
	Daily	Ex.						Daily	Ex.
	4:15	9:00				Lv Buffalo (Exchange St.) Ar		9:20	4:50
	4:58	9:35		0		Lv North Tonawanda Ar		8:40	4:00
	5:10	9:47		5.81		" " " " " " " " " " " "		8:22	3:49
	5:18	9:55		9.35		" " " " " " " " " " " "		8:15	3:42
	5:25	10:01		12.54		" " " " " " " " " " " "		8:04	3:36
	5:30	10:06		14.98		" " " " " " " " " " " "		8:01	3:31
	5:35	10:09		16.82		" " " " " " " " " " " "		8:01	3:26
	5:37	10:11		17.72		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:57	3:24
	5:42	10:16		19.49		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:44	3:20
	5:47	10:18		20.60		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:40	3:18
	5:52	10:22		22.88		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:36	3:14
	5:56	10:26		22.44		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:25	3:10
	6:01	10:31		26.57		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:19	3:06
	6:05	10:38		29.44		" " " " " " " " " " " "		7:12	3:02
	6:20	10:55		35.70		Ar " " " " " " " " " " " "		7:00	2:50

New York Central Form 1001, October 14, 1917. Note the milepost designation for Pembroke Center. Another interesting side note is the question of just how was the train's locomotive handled, whether on the 1947 excursion or in regular service in 1917. The run from Exchange Street to North Tonawanda would need to have the locomotive facing a northerly direction. At North Tonawanda, the locomotive would have to be turned to reverse its direction to continue south back into the City of Tonawanda and then head east just after crossing the Erie Barge Canal on the joint NYC-LV trackage to

Tonawanda Jct. where the Peanut would take off towards Getzville and beyond. Anyone have some insight? Was the engine wye'd in North Tonawanda, (maps show no connection track for northbound trains on the Niagara Branch to attain the eastbound Peanut if a short backup move was involved). Was there possibly a change of locomotives at North Tonawanda? Rail Historians, this is your challenge question! - JCD

A Visit to the NYO&W in 1946



Munnsville, NY The Buffalo Railroad Enthusiasts visited the O&W in April of 1940 & 1941 and again on June 16, 1946 as Buffalo Chapter, NRHS. The trip operated via Oneida, NY over regular NYC and then an O&W special to Sidney. The “Old Woman” certainly knew how to charm railfans and this trip must have been an absolute delight! The O&W alas will cease operations in March 1957. “Munns” depot, as the railroad called it, survives and is restored as a private home. *Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, archives*

CHAPTER CALENDAR

- MAR 12** **Regular meeting. MJ Lewandowski presents Bi-Centennial Railroads, a colorful collection of now historic slides commemorating the railroads participation in our Nation's 1976 birthday bash. Covid safety protocols are in effect!**
- APR 9** **Regular meeting. Program to be announced.**
- MAY 15** **Chiavetta Chicken BBQ fundraiser at the Station, Drive in, Take Out.**

The Niagara Frontier Chapter NRHS, Inc. is a 501 (c) (3) publicly supported organization. Contributions may be deductible for income tax purposes in accordance with the Internal Revenue Service.

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